DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 041 972 UD 010 439

AUTHOR Spaights, Ernest, Ed.
TITLE Support Services for Disadvantaged College Students: A Symposium.
PUB DATE Mar 70
NOTE 14p.; Symposium papers presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention, New Orleans, La., March, 1970

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.80
DESCRIPTORS Admission Criteria, *Ancillary Services, *College Admission, *College Students, Counseling Instructional Programs, *Disadvantaged Youth, *Educational Opportunities, Educational Problems, Instructional Innovation, Learning Experience, Professional Personnel, Recruitment, Supervisor Qualifications, Teacher Aides, Tutoring

ABSTRACT

This symposium on support services for disadvantaged college students is comprised respectively of papers bearing on an effective advising component, effective admissions unit, and effective instructional support component for an educational opportunity program. The emphasis in the first paper is on counseling the disadvantaged student, referred to therein as academic advising. Recruitment and duties of professional advisors, part-time student advisors, and advisor aides are dealt with. In the second paper, successful admissions procedures for a program for disadvantaged students are considered to consist of six main steps: recruitment, orientation, interview, tentative admission, summer preparatory program, and admission. In the third paper, an attempt is made to provide a model instructional support component for an educational opportunity program. In providing for structure in the support component, the following assessment variables are held to be imperative of consideration: past experiences, individual skill levels, environment influences, quality of learning supervision, cost and availability of instructional materials, available facilities, and operational costs. (RJ)

ED041972

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Symposium

Ernest Spaights, Ph.D., Chairman

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

UD010439

Symposium papers read at the
American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention
in New Orleans, Louisiana, March, 1970

TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE ADVISING COMPONENT FOR AN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Clara New, Director*
Experimental Program in Higher Education
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The primary goal of students admitted to universities is to obtain a degree. This statement takes into account the fact that students who attend on a part-time basis, or those having "special student" status have the option of appealing for full matriculation at specified times during the undergraduate phase.

If counseling is accepted as a useful means of helping others to assume self-direction, then it is feasible that academic counseling become a significant part of any higher education program. The legislative actions supporting America's war on poverty verify this theory. Acceptance of the above-stated premise indicates, then, that the specific, broad objective of an advising and counseling component is to assist all students in the preparation of all academic programs, and to function as resource, liaison-teaching agents in all capacities which promote and enhance students' progress toward autonomy within the university. This objective remains constant whether the student is classified disadvantaged, high risk, or meets requirements for regular admission. The emphasis in this paper is placed on counseling the disadvantaged student. For purposes of immediate reference, such an activity will be referred to as academic advising, rather than therapeutic counseling. The varying reasons for this decision will be clearly evident in the discussion of the student population and the responsibilities of personnel required for such an endeavor. Therapeutic elements cannot be totally divorced from the academic advising relationship, but it is strongly felt that campus counseling centers should be equipped to handle any referrals for psychological service.

Procedures vary from institution to institution in the placement of high-risk students: they may be assigned, immediately, to various departments, or they may be classified according to the particular department which admits them. Unless there can be concensus among the various departments regarding the stipulations for admission and financial responsibility for the remedial services necessary for some students, it is best that they remain with the department which admits them. This department must be

*Symposium papers read at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, March, 1970.

cognizant of the implications surrounding the admission of these individuals previously rejected by the university, and be prepared to engage in those activities which propel such students toward successful completion of the prerequisites for a departmental major.

Objective and subjective data are employed in denying higher education to the disadvantaged. Characteristically, they are viewed as being deficient in those academic or behavioral traits essential to success in higher education; they appear unable to initiate and follow through on long-term planning; they function on a minimal level in decision-making situations, particularly those involving numerous alternatives. In other words, they are not attuned to "free choice." Obviously, individuals who exhibit the aforementioned characteristics are not seen as being capable of manipulating the university resources to their advantage. However, if we accept the fact that their goals and aspirations are in concert with those of students readily admissable, is it not logical to proceed further and explore the methods and research at our disposal to determine which techniques work best with specific persons? Careful planning, adequate financing, astute personnel and time are prime factors in an educational setting where grades determine success or failure.

The advising and counseling unit of an educational opportunity program should recruit professional advisors who have had successful academic careers; in addition, they should possess masters' degrees in counseling, or bachelors' degrees in related fields with advanced post-graduate work and relevant experience in working with disadvantaged persons. Competent, successful students having advanced standing (Sophmore 11), who qualify for work-study funds and express knowledgeable interest in advising should be utilized as part-time academic advisors. This professional and semi-professional personnel should be supplemented by a cadre of part-time advanced students (advanced freshmen, etc.). Their respective duties would be as follows:

<u>Professional Staff</u>

1. Professional staff persons would be responsible, totally, for all available information pertinent to requirements for a degree in a particular field.

2. They would be responsible individually and collectively for developing strategies which help students acquire the necessary tools of adjustment essential to successful matriculation, and must have complete knowledge of the

students' backgrounds in order to make thorough, follow-through appraisals needed for offical academic registration.

3. They must be capable of coordinating the activities of part-time student-aides assigned to the unit, constantly being alert to the needs of individual students who will benefit from group advising and those who can be readily identified as having all the skills, and "moxie" to move smoothly through the university structure. There has been adequate proof, in the literature and in living examples, that some disadvantaged students simply need the admission services of higher education programs. Ideally, academic counselors must be so secure within themselves that they do not fall into the trap of manipulating students.

Part-time student advisors would be responsible for the same initial duties assigned to the professional staff, working with fewer students but providing comparable services.

Advisor Aides

Students who have progressed beyond the freshman year and whose grades and adjustment reflect their ability to grasp and master the intricate patterns of survival existing on the university campus should be employed to supplement the full and part-time advising staff in several ways:

1. to execute all necessary contacts with students assigned to a particular advisor. Thus, a student planning to obtain a degree in Elementary Education would be assigned to the professional advisor who is responsible for all students intending to major in Elementary Education. Such contacts would be utilized to impart information and techniques useful to beginning and continuing students who derive benefit from the experience of successful students presently treading the same academic path and who are vulnerable to the environmental forces of the university establishment.

2. to provide the professional advisor with valid feedback for the anecdotal records kept on students' progress, or lack of progress. Such feedback could lead to a three-way conference, but would not negate the personal responsibility of the professional advisor for active participation in the educational process of all students

assigned to him. Individual students would be encouraged to confer with the professional advisor at any time.

3. to utilize the strengths, particularly the tenacity, which appears to radiate from "peer models" in a disadvantaged setting. Time is of essence and the university examination calendar makes no allowance for those students who experience difficulty in adjusting to the demands of the institution.

It is mandatory that one member of the professional advising staff have expertise in vocational and career counseling. Students who change their goals should be channeled into their desired vocations before leaving the department. Those who find a five-year stay at the university unrealistic because of financial obligations or unforeseen events should be informed of associate degree programs offered by various departments. The counseling-out process should actually be a counseling-in activity. Ideally, I am talking about a structure which would recruit and employ professional personnel in a highly selective manner and which would facilitate the opportunity for in-depth evaluations and referrals for those disadvantaged students requiring vocational career counseling. This request is consistent with the democratic philosophy which stresses individuals having the opportunity of finding careers that are consonant with their interests, abilities, and potentialities: it is imperative that we discover talent when it is only potential ability.

The implications of such a structure are directly related to the rationale for the existence of higher education programs, which is to recruit, admit and retain as many disadvantaged individuals as possible who will benefit from higher education. A significantly larger number of persons could be admitted without overburdening the advising staff, who should have ample time to work cooperatively in evaluating specific long- and short-term behavioral objectives which could be observed, documented and refined. Evaluative research on counseling the disadvantaged enrolled in higher education programs is virtually non-existent.

The advising component would have an extended, unlimited opportunity to initiate intensive individual and/or small group counseling for those students who function more effectively in a group setting with successful peers who have encountered the same distress and are enthusiastic and articulate in the same language, and will serve as existing models.

We have known for some time that the label "disadvantaged" is too inclusive for research purposes; perhaps, we should turn

our attention to styles and differences, as disadvantaged students are first and foremost individuals. What works for one does not necessarily work for another. There is considerable agreement that the content of the counseling transaction needs alteration for the disadvantaged, but there is little agreement about the nature of that content, or what it should be. The rapid changes which have been taking place among some groups of disadvantaged because of federally-funded programs suggest that the continued use of inappropriate measuring tools will consistently lead to inappropriate expectations and a waste of money and manpower.

TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE ADMISSIONS UNIT FOR AN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Jacqueline Stier, Assistant Director
Experimental Program in Higher Education
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Ideally, an admissions unit acts as a form of liaison for a prospective applicant who enters an educational opportunity program. Its purpose is to present him with information regarding the program, the school, other alternatives and information regarding his role in these various settings. It is, hopefully, the first step in an attempt to provide a smooth transition between high school and further training. In addition, the admissions unit attempts to provide to the program an accurate and clear assessment of all prospective candidates, furnishing everything necessary to insure the most comprehensive selection possible.

Successful admissions procedures for a program for disadvantaged students should consist of the following six main steps: recruitment, orientation, interview, tentative admission, summer preparatory program and admission.

The following is a brief discussion of the six steps. With the exception of recruitment, all steps are taken in cooperation with the applicant and everything is explained to him in writing before the procedure begins. He is aware not only of what will have to be done, but why.

Recruitment

Recruitment efforts should be made to contact - directly - those able to benefit most from the planned program. It is essential, for example, that contact be made in the high schools and information circulated in the most effective manner. Posters, high school assemblies, direct student mailings to those schools involved are good methods. Agency referrals and referrals from current students are also good, but should not be solely relied upon. The best recruitment method is interpersonal contact - an initial interview during which all aspects of the program can be discussed with regard to one specific individual. At this time, all of his questions can be answered - most of which would not be voiced in a group session. The initial interview can be held in the program's offices but, ideally, should be held in the high school to be more accessible to prospective students.

Initial interviews can be held during on-location college admissions programs or during career days. In many schools, it is possible to have a day - or evening - designated as a day set aside for the specific program. During this day prospective applicants are able to stop in and see program personnel during their free time. During this time, contact is made with the applicants who probably never would have applied directly to the program on their own. It is essential that contact be made with the large number of students not dealing with agencies or not personally knowing others in the program. In many cases, a refusal letter for regular admission to one school may be the end of any further applications or information-seeking by an applicant, so all potential students should be followed up.

Orientation

It is essential before more serious consideration be given to an applicant, that he be made completely aware of exactly what the program is - what it offers to him, what it expects from him. It is important that both parties clearly understand just exactly what the other expects before entering into any agreement. An orientation day is one of the most effective methods of handling this.

An orientation day might start with short formal talks by those heading units of the program with which the student can be expected to come into contact, and could be followed by small, informal group discussions. At this time university tours may be offered, along with the chance to sit in on classes, and questions about college in general - not necessarily just the particular program - may be discussed. This session can also be attended by the parents of the applicant, and their questions or apprehensions can be dealt with at this time.

The main purpose is to acquaint the prospective applicant with all phases of the program and to clear up any questions he may have regarding his possible participation. It will give him all the information he needs to make a decision as to whether to pursue application further.

An orientation day can also be used as an information-getting day. A part of the day might be reserved for additional testing, writing samples and anything else the unit feels is needed to supplement the information already received through the regular admissions procedures.

Interview

In addition to contact with the admissions unit, it is advisable to have program staff members - particularly those in an advising capacity - meet prospective students and make recommendations. They are the people that will have to work with the applicant once he is admitted, and they may see something regarding their ability to work with a particular applicant. Through periodic meetings with the advisory staff, the admissions unit can offer explanations of interpretation of various test scores, transcripts and other information - such as special items of concern, confidentiality, etc. It is important that prior to a meeting with a prospective student, an advisor has a chance to review all available information. Information useful at the time of interview would be:

1. college application;

2. college entrance examinations plus some form of examination measuring reading ability and another measuring interest;

3. high school records - not only courses and grades but attendance, recommendations from instructors, etc.;

4. budget forms and the results of a financial aids interview. This should indicate a budget plan for the coming year - both school and personal expenses - which would help eliminate the mid-semester withdrawal due to a lack of financial planning.

5. recommendations - usually about three are required. The recommendations are provided by the program. One recommendation should ideally be from an instructor at the high school. The remaining are left to the applicant's discretion. These recommendations could sometimes give additional insight into the student.

Tentative Admission

Upon completion of an interview with a staff member, all materials available, including staff recommendations, are presented to the director of the program. If it is felt that the program can be of some assistance to a prospective applicant, he is admitted on a tentative basis to the September term pending completion of a summer preparatory program. This program consists of college preparatory work in basic skill areas plus an introduction to the university itself. Prior to the start of the summer program, an agreement is signed by the applicant and by the program staff,

explaining the stipulations and facilities the program promises as aids to the student and, in return, the stipulations expected of the student. An example of one such stipulation is a requirement regarding regular class attendance.

Those applicants who find the program is not what they are looking for or those applicants the program staff feels it cannot assist are referred, in a personal interview, to a program, school, or agency more suitable to their current needs and interests.

Summer Program

The summer program consists of an eight-week session, non-credit, running concurrently with the regular summer session. Thus, in a more relaxed manner, an applicant can be exposed to the program, university studies and university life. During this period possible withdrawal problems can be dealt with and, hopefully, solved. All students will have advising during the program. The summer program has, on many campuses, been used as an admission criterion for those in special admissions programs in addition to the regular admission procedures.

Admission

Those applicants completing the summer program are admitted to the September program and begin "regular" college courses for credit. These courses are selected with the assistance of their advisor, who is the same person they have become familiar with during their summer experience. They are now classified as regular university students, have had some experience on campus, and have, if they so request, backup resources available such as tutors, workshops, and course advising. The chances for success are much greater than had they started without any precollege experience or advising.

There are many programs dealing with the education of disadvantaged students and there is some research available on the programs. There are areas, however, needing more research and data. One such area is that of the refusal of the person needing services the program does not feel it can provide. How was such a person handled? Was he referred? How? What method of follow-up, if any, was used to judge the validity of the referral method?

TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT COMPONENT FOR AN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

John F. Schesta, Assistant Director
Experimental Program in Higher Education
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Introduction

The following paper is an attempt to provide a model instructional support component in an educational opportunity program. It is a culmination of the research and experience of the Experimental Program in Higher Education. It is the responsibility and goal of an instructional support component to provide for predictable, structured change. My supposition here is that an unstructured learning experience is ineffective. In providing for structure, the following assessment variables must be taken into consideration:

1. past experiences
2. individual skill levels
3. environmental influences
4. quality of supervision of learning
5. cost and availability of instructional materials
6. available facilities
7. cost of operation

Rationale for Instructional Support Services

Educationally disadvantaged students, like other college and university students, are functioning in a basically hostile environment. The university is a highly competitive situation and has as its purpose the establishment of a cultural elite. It operates according to assembly line production and student casualties are high. It expects a common level of preparation and is not geared to correcting deficiencies. Because of the aforementioned characteristics the student has little time through experience to acquire the skills necessary for survival.

Tasks of Instructional Support Services

The tasks before the instructional support component when looking at the individual student are to:

1. determine if the student's problem is an instructional or skill problem as opposed to a financial or personal problem;

2. determine if the component can cope with the problem if it is instructional in nature;

3. determine how the problem should be dealt with when taking into consideration both terminal and interim performance objectives, i.e., attainment of degrees and passing courses;

4. meet the aforementioned objectives through the various units of the instructional support services.

Units of Instructional Support Services

To achieve the various aforementioned tasks the instructional support unit should provide a minimum of four activities. They are: tutoring, curricular and instructional innovation, research and evaluation, and administration.

The goal of the tutoring activity should be to provide the students with the individual attention that will supplement their academic instruction. It usually will be based on present requirements and is course oriented. Professional tutors should be used whenever possible.

Volunteer tutors, when used, should include faculty members and fellow students. Recruitment may be achieved through the university newspaper and letters to faculty and local community groups. One must assess the skills of the volunteer through an individual interview, and a tutor orientation should be provided for the volunteers, either individually or in groups.

In order to maintain an adequate assessment procedure, an intake tutor system should be instituted. It is the responsibility of the intake tutor to assess all students requesting or requiring tutorial support. The intake tutor then prescribes the needed exercises and provides the student with a continuing tutor.

When using volunteer tutors the following problems may evolve:

1. a lack of minimum skills on the part of the tutors necessary for effective tutoring;

2. a lack of rigorous follow-up and evaluation of student progress by tutors;

3. a lack of sufficient time available to the tutors to work with the students;

4. an inappropriate attitude on the part of the tutors which makes then unable to adequately structure the learning experience of the disadvantaged.

The ultimate goal of this unit is to provide an each-one-teach-one learning environment. This means that one tutor will work with one tutee. The tutor could be professional or a fellow student that has taken or is taking the course.

This unit is also concerned with developing various combinations of courses and people to meet the needs of the students. Most work should be accomplished through university faculty members and departments. Students will not be at a uniform educational level where one curricular pattern can prepare them for full-time credit work. The curriculum, then, should be flexible and suited to the academic needs of each student. The following principles should guide staff decisions in the instructional area:

1. it is difficult, but important, to distinguish those with ability and limited background from those for whom a college education is not a realistic goal; and

2. final standards of achievement should not be lowered, for this would be a disservice to the students involved.

Most of the students will have basic deficiencies in communications (reading and writing). Remedial courses should be offered in each of these areas on a credit basis. The goal of these developmental courses is to improve a present condition by reinforcing or adding to present skills and knowledge. It is based on anticipated or future whole groups of tasks and is primarily concerned with anticipated reading needs, minimally-needed study skills, and basic needs in composition mechanics.

Whenever possible, teaching staff members should be appointed by academic departments of the university. This will mean that a faculty member could teach courses for a program and also hold an appointment in a particular department. This enhances academic acceptance of the program's efforts.

This unit should also explore such areas as:

1. providing for learning experiences beyond limited curricular areas;

2. developing instructional materials;

3. exploring techniques for providing the disadvantaged with greater skills in conceptual, abstract, and critical thinking;

4. providing credit non-transfer courses in such areas as composition, mathematics and natural sciences; and

5. providing precollege experiences in systems coping at the university.

The research and evaluation activity should concern itself with the on-going evaluation of the following:

1. skill development - pre, post, and longitudinal studies
2. curricular innovation - pre, post, and longitudinal studies
3. student, faculty, and tutor perceptions

A great deal of testing will be necessary. Therefore, the program should provide for a resident researcher to evaluate its efforts. This unit should also be concerned with looking at other programs, textbooks, and research projects and then making inputs into the various units of the component.

An administration group should provide for the coordination of the other units and needs to be headed by a competent supervisor. The supervisor should also be on the program administrative committee and must be responsible for policy-making decisions for the entire program based on the inputs received from the research and evaluation unit.

The supervisor should provide for:

1. liaison with faculty and administration
2. communication with other programs
3. selection and utilization of subject matter
4. selection and utilization of tutors and instructors
5. scheduling and record keeping
6. planning and setting realistic goals for the component
7. training of teachers of disadvantaged college students